

Community TAG meeting Devil's Swamp Lake

June 25, 2012

Attendees: EPA Bart Canellas, Bill Little, DHH Dr. Ratard, USACE Bobby Dupantier, TAG Rosemary Jones, and Rev. Claiborne, Daniel Shular TA, LEJCOC Albertha Hastings, Louisiana Bucket Brigade, and 17 community members.

Questions:

1. Why did the article in the newspaper state that according to the EPA fact sheet 1500 people live in the 2 mile radius of the site? Where does this radius start and end? Is this the extent (distance) of the contamination? When can you do an examination beyond the 2 miles?
A. We aren't familiar with the document they are using for this number. There are a lot of numbers on the internet concerning demographics. Most are based on census information. Populations are used in the Superfund ranking process and part of the Hazardous Ranking System (HRS). The HRS package was completed and the Site was proposed to the NPL. The decision was made to move forward with the investigation and changing the population number would have no effect on this decision.
2. PCB's are the focus of this study but there are lots of other chemicals, worst then PCB's, that we are exposed too.
A. The TA explained that we are testing for other chemical along with the PCB's
3. Does this investigation include the Town of Alsen?
4. What about the people? You just keep testing the fish; you need to test the people.
5. What is so difficult about finding out what the people in this Community are dying from? If the fish are contaminated, the people got sick from the fish that only make sense! You need to study the Community!
6. DHH needs to do a study on the Community.
7. Why don't they test Humans?
A. In reference to the 5 questions above: Bart explained there are three parts to the Health question in terms of risk:
EPA will complete a Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) and a baseline Ecological Risk Assessment (BERA). This will generate a risk number to help EPA determine if remedial action is needed at the site.
The data collected from the fish and crawfish samples, will be used by LDEQ, LDHH and other State Agencies to do a reassessment of the current fish consumption advisory.
And LDHH will do a Health Assessment.

8. We feel we are totally disconnected from the people doing the investigation. How do we get to the table with you?
9. A lady in the Community stated she is dying of cancer and Devil's Swamp is mentioned in a book she is reading, about people dying from industrial contamination. "LAYING WASTE" by Michael H. Brown. (The book is about the Love Canal and exposes more of the chemical waste dumps across the United States.)
 - A. Dr Ratard (LDHH) explained that health effect studies were difficult to pin point a specific cause effect to a particular individual, who is going to be sick or not, epidemiology studies and health surveys may require a large population analysis to define a trend, not based on a single individual.
10. What is the connection between the formula for an NPL Site and the Community? Was anyone in the Community involved? What questions were asked of the Community? When does the magic # come?
11. When will the Community know the results? We need a timetable of what's going on and need to be kept up-to-date.
 - A. Bart explained this is a multi-step process. First we need to do the sampling. The samples go to the Lab to be analyzed. The results are sent back to the EPA, this data needs to be evaluated, validated and compiled into a report. This report is then reviewed by Federal and State agencies. The results are sent to the TAG for their review and comments. After that we proceed with the HHRA, The BERA, A Feasibility Study, Alternatives, Proposed Plan, Public Meeting, Comment Period, etc. They want a specific date so Bart Told them the Tier ii report will be available by December 31.
12. The water in Alsen is no good. We can't eat the vegetables out of our gardens.
 - A. In November 2009, LDHH completed a Health Consultation on the Alsen Community Water Supply. The Alsen water comes from the 2 principal wells in the area and 1 back-up source. Contamination concentrations detected in the three wells were below comparison values and it was determined the water posed no concerns for peoples' health and no public health actions are needed at this time.
In May 2010, representatives of the EPA and their contractor collected tap water samples in the community to further evaluate citizens concerns, related to the drinking water supply. The results were confirmed that the water posed no concern for peoples' health.
13. The Companies dumped chemicals into the swamp before the lake was built. They used that contaminated dirt to build the levee. Now the levee is breached and that contaminate is spreading into the harbor and into the community when it floods. You need to test the levee; you need 10 foot core samples!!!
 - A. The representative of the Corp of Engineers stated that he would look into the construction of the levee and who was to be in charge of the maintenance of the levee and would report back to them at the next scheduled meeting. The property owner also claimed Rollins had been dumping into the swamp prior to the building on the levee and that contaminated soil was used

in the building of the levee. He wants EPA to do a core sample of the levee to look for contamination. Bart explained that there is no information in the site files to indicate any contamination in the levee soil that would present an unacceptable risk requiring remediation.

14. Clean Harbors has been hauling stuff out of the facility for 18 months and taking it to Alabama. They are trying to get rid of stuff.

A. Clean Harbors is a permitted regulated facility by the State, LDEQ, and we are here to discuss Devil's Swamp Lake. The TA(Technical Advisor volunteered to look into this and Bart reminded them that the TA's effort need to be devoted to Devil's Swamp Lake only, and they acknowledged this.

15. There is stuff buried over there, there are tank cars buried and all kinds of chemicals they dumped in the swamp. We have people that live in the Community that worked there, and know where these things were dumped and buried.

16. Is there a current permit to discharge into the Lake?

17. Is the Health Risk just based on the fish? The soil is where the contaminants are, and they are in the soil in Alsen.

18. Love Canal is just like Devil's Swamp, the same contaminants, and those people where moved. We need to be moved too! You need to buy us out!

19. It has been known for ten years that the contaminants have migrated into the Alsen Community. You haven't done anything in Alsen.

These were the answers at the meeting to the best of our memory. It is a summarization, since we were there for 2 ½ hours, a lot more was said, but these were the major points.

The major concerns:

Community Health Study

Date for Risk Study

Levee Ownership /Responsibility

Levee Soil Contamination Buried

Levee Breaches Responsibility

Community Water Supply

18 Month Transporting Waste Out

51 Years Nothing Done